

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 7 (February 11-17, 2018)

Because many of you have commented that the study on prayer has been helpful, I will continue with this subject for the next few weeks.

Sunday, February 11 (read Matthew 6:5-8)

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.”

(Matthew 6:5)

Prior to teaching His disciples what we know as the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus teaches them to examine their **motives**. He has already taught them to examine their motives in giving (1-4), so now He challenges them to do the same with their prayer life. For the Christian, all sins have been paid for; therefore, as a result, we will never be judged for them. However, we **will** stand before Jesus and be judged for our **motives** in all of our “good works” (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 4:5). As you can see from the printed verse, the motive of the hypocrites is, “to be seen by men” (v. 5). The praise and respect they have gotten from onlookers is all they will ever get. In seeking the praise of men, they have forfeited the praise of Heaven!

Monday, February 12 (reread Matthew 6:5-8)

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (Matthew 6:6)

It is extremely important that you have a **private place** to pray. It’s symbolic of shutting the world out while you talk and listen to the Father. There is certainly a time and need for public prayer, but there is also a need to have a special time and place for personal, private prayer. Unlike the hypocrites described in yesterday’s devotion, the people who exercise private prayer are seen and heard and rewarded by the Father. Just being in His Presence should be reward enough, but we also enjoy the benefit of answered prayers over the years. If you have not already done so, set aside a **time** and **place** for this every day!

Tuesday, February 13 (reread Matthew 6:5-8)

“And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.” (Matthew 6:7)

I recommend that you spend as much time as you can alone with the Father, but He cannot be coerced into giving us what we want because of our lengthy prayers. The pagans repeat the same phrase over and over, thinking that their false god will hear them (see 1 Kings 18:26). It’s okay to ask for the same request day after day, particularly if it is for someone’s salvation, but vain repetition will not influence God. He already knows what you need before you begin your prayer (v. 8). Someone may ask, “Then why should I pray?” Great question! Prayer does not necessarily change God, but it changes those who pray by bringing them in line with His will. Also, the Lord has many gifts that are meant for you, but you have never asked for them (James 4:2). After teaching His disciples these principles of prayer, Jesus teaches them the model prayer that we studied last week.

Wednesday, February 14 (read Romans 8:26-28)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

The printed verse was originally my favorite passage in God's Word, because I was introduced to it following the death of my second son, Michael Todd. I was much too young in my faith to understand the concept that precedes the great truth, however. We do not even know how to pray, because we always ask God for what we perceive to be good things (v. 26). The selfishness of our sin nature makes it impossible for us to be unbiased in our requests. That's where the role of the Spirit comes in! He hears the desires of our hearts and presents our requests to the Father, because He knows our minds as well as the Father's (v. 27). He sees to it that we obtain what we **need**; then He oversees the process of working everything together for our good (v. 28). In our daily prayers, we should remember to praise and thank the Spirit for His wonderful intervention. You never need to be overwhelmed by prayer, because you are never alone!

Thursday, February 15 (read Ephesians 6:10-17)

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. (Ephesians 6:10)

Take the time to read this entire passage that leads up to commands regarding prayer. Before you leave home each morning, you need to put on the entire spiritual armor, because Satan and his army of demons are waiting to attack the partially dressed believer (v. 11-12). The **full armor** includes the **belt of truth** and the **breastplate of righteousness** that you will learn about in the gospel of peace (v. 14-15). The **shield of faith** will deflect all of the devil's flaming arrows (v. 16) and the **helmet of salvation** will protect your head from his politically correct propaganda, replacing his lie with the **sword of the Spirit** (The Word of God, v. 17). If you are walking with God, you don't have to protect your rear "for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard" (Isaiah 52:12).

Friday, February 16 (read Ephesians 6:18-20)

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:18)

You may want to review the devotion from January 13 that introduced praying to the acronym of TRIP (thanksgiving, requests, intercession and prayers). Also be reminded of Wednesday's devotion that teaches the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer. Today's printed passage reminds us to **keep on praying** in the Spirit, particularly in the area of intercession for other Christians. Believers throughout the world are undergoing persecution that I hope we never experience in America. It's our privilege and duty to hold these Christians up in prayer so that they will not yield to the threats of the enemies. Our entire study on prayer is designed to help you pray more effectively. I pray that you allow God to make a difference!

Saturday, February 17 (reread Ephesians 6:18-20)

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel . . . (Ephesians 6:19)

Ephesians 4:29 has been my goal throughout my ministry: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." Now, perhaps for the first time, I am asking you to **pray** that I may achieve that long-term goal this year. Some people need encouragement; others need correcting and rebuking (see 2 Timothy 4:2), but no one needs to hear unwholesome talk. Pray that I will be able to encourage, correct and rebuke with **boldness** and **tenderness** as I proclaim "the mystery of the gospel." The mystery is revealed in Colossians 1:27: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Use this inner power of His Spirit to pray for everyone God places on your heart!